**<http://debbieshultsblog.blogspot.com.au/2010/08/shared-reading.html>**

**Tuesday, August 31, 2010**

**Shared Reading**

**Shared Reading:  
An Effective Gateway Strategy for High School Classrooms**  
  
Lately I’ve begun referring to shared reading as a gateway strategy. By gateway, I mean it opens the door to other powerful teaching strategies. Shared reading happens when the teacher reads aloud while students read long, silently, with their eyes on the text the teacher is reading. While some secondary teachers think this means they are, “doing all the [work](http://debbieshultsblog.blogspot.com.au/2010/08/shared-reading.html),” an effective shared read directs students onto the fast lane of independent learning. Here are some ways a shared read can lead to stronger and more focused teaching.  
  
**Shared reading gets everyone on the same page.**I mean that literally. Moving a class of mixed ability high school students forward can be a bit chaotic. Some students can easily synthesize ideas while others are still [working](http://debbieshultsblog.blogspot.com.au/2010/08/shared-reading.html) on basic comprehension. Many teachers are left trying to deliver content like a physician prescribes medicines, in various doses. The problem with this prescribed teaching is that some students never get the full dose of content, and their academic health becomes permanently anemic. By relying on shared reading, the teacher creates a level playing field for students. After a shared read, every student can engage in a full array of learning activities which follow from increased, across the board, content knowledge.  
  
**Shared reading presents students with a strong model of a proficient reader.**It may have been Isabelle Beck or Chris Tovani or Nancy Allen or Doug Fisher or Nancy Frey or all of these literacy leaders who designated the teacher as the best reader in the class. According to these thinkers, students deserve to see a model of great reading and the teacher should be this model. Part of that modeling includes using the Think-Aloud strategy during shared reading. During the reading, teachers pause at difficult or significant passages and think out loud. This strategy shows students the inside of the mind of a proficient reader and teaches students how to read as a critical thinker. For some secondary content teachers, reading aloud is not in their comfort zone, but with practice, they become skilled oral readers in short time. When teachers realize the power of shared reading, they practice the strategy until they become experts.  
  
**Shared reading forms the ground work for authentic differentiation.**The challenge of having mixed ability readers in your class presents some pretty daunting barriers to differentiation and sometimes leads to the practice of diluting content for the very students who have lost the most ground in content knowledge. With a shared read, everyone is exposed to the [full](http://debbieshultsblog.blogspot.com.au/2010/08/shared-reading.html) richness of curriculum. After the shared read, a teacher can begin to differentiate learning activities. While one group of students returns to a specific passage to deepen their basic comprehension of the text, another group works on analysis and synthesis. Shared reading allows for real differentiation without diminishing access to content for some students.  
  
**And that’s not all.**Shared reading has also been shown to increase reading fluency. While students keep their eyes on text following the most fluent reader in the room, they meet new words, hear correct pronunciations, and develop similar reading fluency. Shared reading enriches every student and includes all students in rich and valuable content centered discussions. For these reasons and more, shared reading produces a high tide of learning which raises all learners.